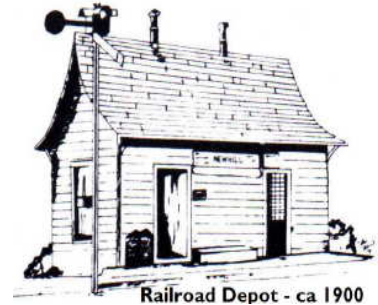


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# New Hill Community Association, Inc.

June 27, 2006

Daniel M. Blaisdell, P. E.  
Assistant Chief, Engineering Branch  
Construction Grants and Loans Section  
North Carolina Division of Water Quality  
1633 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1633



Dear Mr. Blaisdell,

I am Paul Barth, President of the New Hill Community Association, Inc. I want to bring to your attention two (2) excellent articles (Attachment 1 & 2) that were on the front page of the Apex Herald Newspaper dated June 21, 2006. The Editor, Shawn Daly, ran these stories regarding the recent DENR Public Hearing conducted on June 15, 2006. I believe these articles capture the essence of the public meeting.

Sincerely,

Paul Barth  
President, New Hill Community Association, Inc.

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **DENR officials urged to consider human factors**

#### **Black residents take special pride in their community**

By SHAWN DALEY, EDITOR

For more than six decades, New Hill has been a great source of pride for the African-American community.

It has been one of the few places in the area where blacks have owned their own property and handed it down to the following generations.

So when it was finally revealed that the Cary-led Western Wake Partners, which includes Apex, Holly Springs and Morrisville, were planning to build a regional sewage plant in the heart of New Hill it came as a devastating blow.

"Basically, the African-Americans in New Hill have owned the land 40, 50, and 60 years," said Elain Thomas Joyner. "Not many African-Americans own property in this area.

"They worked hard and their intent was to pass that land on to their children and welcome other African-Americans into the community. This sewage plant will devalue that property. There is also the issue of a sewage plant coming into an African-American community and what that means to us."

Joyner, 51, was only five years old when her family moved to New Hill. She, seven siblings and her parents lived at 8305 Stewart Road for many years.

Although she lives in Friendship now, Joyner still attends First New Hill Baptist Church and has close ties to the community.

At a public hearing held last Thursday at Apex Town Hall by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Joyner spoke of the injustice of forcing a sewage plant on the residents of New Hill.

"Minorities, especially African-Americans, have endured great atrocities throughout the history of this country in which we live," said Joyner. "We have been subjected to the brutality and inhumanity of slavery. We have been lynched for the color of our skin. We have been assaulted with injustices and inequalities.

"And now the Western Wake Partners want to dump their sewage on us and hope that we feel good about it. Well, we don't and we won't."

Apex Town Councilman Bill Jensen asked DENR officials to look beyond the plant's affects on the environment and also take into consideration its affects on the "human ecosystme."

"There are other sites east of Highway 1 that are located in less populated areas than the selected side," said Jensen. "There is also a site one mile south of the selected site that provides for almost identical infrastructure and costs and it does not impact New Hill folks to the extent the selected site does. This site was never formally considered.

"The selected site could not be worse for our friends and neighbors living in New Hill. Their

ecosystem of families, homes, churches and businesses will be irreparably damaged by this proposed wastewater facility. The New Hill folks and their ecosystem must be considered along with the impacts on other natural resources."

Although Weatherly approved the site selection by sending a letter to Cary, the town council never formally voted on this matter. Both Jensen and fellow councilman Bill Sutton have repeatedly requested to have a formal vote on the matter but their attempts were denied by Councilmen Bryan Gossage, Mike Jones and Gene Schulze.

Jensen asked DENR to use a more open-minded approach.

"I am asking you, I am begging you," said Jensen. "Please vigorously consider the human aspect of this site selection along with all the other environmental considerations.

"Please use a wide lens to view the implications of this wastewater facility site. Use your long-term, wide range vision to guide the Western Wake Partners toward a better site based on compassion and concern for our friends and neighbors in New Hill."

Nearly everyone in attendance gave Jensen a standing ovation following his speech.

Joyner said the entire controversy has made New Hill a more closely knit community.

"We have all come together over this," said Joyner. "The white residents are the ones who informed us of the plans for the plant and they've really included us every step of the way.

"But while it's nice that we've all been able to come together that certainly doesn't mean we want that sewage plant."

## **ATTACHMENT 2**

### **Taking a stand**

#### **New Hill residents look to DENR for some help**

By SHAWN DALEY, EDITOR

The Western Wake Partners gathered an impressive lineup of local officials to deliver a litany of reasons on why building a regional sewage plant in the middle of New Hill was a good idea.

But there was little doubt that the evening belonged to those who are having the plant forced into their community - the residents of New Hill.

Shut out from the site selection process by the Cary-led partners of Apex, Holly Springs and Morrisville from the beginning, the residents finally had a proper forum to air their concerns.

More than 40 speakers including a handful from Apex and neighboring towns, pled their case last Thursday at a public hearing held by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The 2 1/2-hour meeting began with Apex Mayor Keith Weatherly, Wake County Manager David Cooke, Wake County Director of Environmental Services Richard Rowe, and Apex Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Chairman Randy Clayton all speaking in glowing terms about the facility and the positive impact it will have on the area.

Even Nick Nolan, the public works director in Fayetteville, made the long drive to Apex Town Hall to make sure his comments were heard.

DENR held the hearing to gather public comment as the agency begins reviewing an environmental impact statement concerning the project. About 100 people attended the event.

Economics, growth projections, environmental factors and the need to comply with state regulations were among the reasons given by proponents for placing the sewage plant just off of old U.S. 1.

For those arguing against the site selection, the common theme was a simple one - there are better places to build the sewage plant.

"I understand growth issues," said real estate agent Colin McNair. "But (this plant) should be located away from the citizens of New Hill."

New Hill native Wayne Womble said Progress Energy took thousands of acres from New Hill when it built the Shearon Harris Nuclear Plant in the 1980s and only used a small portion of it.

Now, he noted, the Western Wake Partners were trying to do the same thing.

"When bureaucrats see a map all they see (of New Hill) is an open, nameless place," said Womble. "If I built an outhouse in your backyard and took the key you might get upset. They want to put one in our front yard."

"Progress Energy has all that land and there is no reason it can't be used (for the sewage plant). It's time for entities to take care of their own problems and stop dumping on us."

Many residents criticized Cary for keeping the site selection process secret and for not informing New Hill residents about its plans.

"Why was it kept secret?" asked Gerald Gunter. "Cary shows contempt and disrespect to its neighbors.

"DENR needs to send a message that this won't be tolerated and that the government works for everyone not just rich citizens.

Lauren Forbes said the sewage plant wouldn't benefit New Hill residents because they won't be allowed to use it.

The only way a New Hill resident could use the facility is if they were annexed by Apex. Even if they were annexed it would cost about \$10,000 to connect to the system.

"They need to be annexed and Apex has no plans to annex them," said Forbes. "For all intents and purposes it has no benefit to New Hill residents."

James Clinton, pastor of First New Hill Baptist Church, challenged DENR to require the partners to find another site for the plant.

He noted that he recently attended a National History Day event with his young son and the theme was "Taking a Stand."

"Now you have the opportunity to make history," said Clinton. "I hope you will make the decision and take a stand with the little people of New Hill."

Joe Pleasant, pastor of New Hill Baptist Church said the plant would be situated very close to his church and might even lead to its closure.

"I see a future with no church there," said Pleasant. "would anyone want that on their hands standing before God, that it was (their) fault the church closed?"

N.C. House of Representatives candidate Ed Ridpath and Wake County Commissioner candidate Libby Brown also spoke against the planned site location.

Bob Kelly said New Hill residents realize the importance of building a regional plant but don't understand why Cary and the partners chose this site.

"No one has said the plant isn't needed," said Kelly. "We are just asking to move it one mile down the road to land already acquired by Progress Energy.

"Then we will all sit down and shut up."